1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

[P. 218]

XII

Local Government

829 154 If the Greek villager did not have a government to curse, he would be in a bad way indeed. Somewhere he has to find a scapegoat for the hard life that he leads. He could berate his wife or beat his children, but that would give only limited relief, since he knows they are not responsible for his difficulties; he could raise his clenched fist to the heavens and curse the Almighty, and he does this in some of the most colorful language known to man, but that too has its possible dangers, since the Almighty in a less genial mood might give him his comeuppance. What better object for his scorn could he find than the government, which is always wanting taxes, takes him off to military service, asks him innumerable questions every time he seeks a loan, and stages a periodic election prior to which "lying" politicians come to seek his vote. [666]

829 619 At the same time, the peasant is shrewd enough to distinguish between Greece as a nation, to which he can be tremendously loyal should anyone cast aspersions upon it, and whatever national government is in power. He also draws a distinction between the local government of his village and the central government in Athens, with his views of the former going up and down, but his regard for the latter seldom going up. There is no mercurial quality, therefore, to peasant politics. If the peasant does shift his [666]